



Clinton Lake Report

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**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Kansas City District

Corps of Engineer's Update

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As the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' lake manager, I would like to welcome you to Clinton Lake.

With all the foreseen and unforeseen events that have occurred in our country and in the world, our on-site budget has been sizably reduced. There is only so much federal money to go around and agencies like ours have to tighten our budgets to meet what we have been allotted.

That said, we will do our best to again provide you with the many services you are used to at our parks. We will have to cut back on summer hires, park mowings and major repairs. The mowing issue will probably be the most unpopular reduction. Many of our repeat visitors are used to our parks being mowed frequently, much like our lawns at home. This unfortunately won't happen this year. Last year we had some of our campers mowing their campsites and campsites of their friends. We cannot allow this because of the contractual agreement with our mowing contractor and the potential liability that this unauthorized activity could create. I felt I needed to be upfront

with our lake recreational users this year. Hopefully the budget issue will be better next year. One very exciting park im-



provement scheduled for this year is completion of a new universally accessible multipurpose trail utilizing a grant awarded to the Kansas Trails Council from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Visitors will be able to connect to Lawrence's extensive network of trails and the Sander's Mound area from our recently renovated Overlook Park. The trail construction will be accomplished through a partnership agreement with the City of Lawrence and the Kansas Trails Council. The funding originates from the Federal Highway Administration exclusively for trail construction and is administered locally by the Kansas Department of Wildlife

and Parks.

Visitors will also notice that the speed limits have been raised near the dam area. The Public Works Departments of Lawrence and Douglas County assisted us in determining an appropriate speed limit for the roads across and below the dam. The speed limit across the dam is now 50 miles per hour. Below the dam, visitors approaching from the south may proceed at 40 miles per hour, slow down to 20 miles per hour at the Outlet area, and then proceed at 30 miles per hour until the intersection with the dam road. Always remember to obey posted speed limits so that we all remain safe.

As always, exercise due diligence and safety when boating, swimming, or fishing on the water. I would encourage you to contact our office if you have any questions or comments. Thanks for visiting Clinton Lake and I hope you have an enjoyable recreation experience and will visit us again.

Lew Ruona
Operations Project Manager
Clinton and Hillsdale Lakes
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Special Hunts Teach Safe and Ethical Hunting

Two special hunts were held at Clinton Lake over the last year. In the fall of 2005, a special Deer Archery Hunt was held during the month of November in the Bloomington and Rockhaven Parks. Eleven designated units accommodated 22 hunters (Buddy Hunt) and several deer were harvested. Participants enjoyed hunting in areas that are normally off-limits to hunters, while the Corps of Engineers and Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks sponsors appreciated the safe and ethical hunting of deer. Special hunts such as these



Youth Hunt Participants

fulfill management goals of maintaining a healthy and sustainable deer population in the park areas.

In the spring of 2006, the Clinton Lake Youth Turkey Hunt was held in Bloomington Park. Nine designated

units accommodated nine youth hunters (10-16 yrs. of age) and nine guide/mentors that acted as callers and teachers for the youth hunters. The hunt went well, but only one young hunter was successful in bagging two turkeys. The other eight hunters, while disappointed about not getting a turkey, had a great time. Youth hunts are a great way to develop a new generation of safe and ethical hunters in a relatively controlled hunting venue. Those interested in special hunts should contact the Corps of Engineer's office.

Smallest Museum in the World

Martha Parker, Director

The Clinton Lake Museum is leased from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and operated by the Clinton Lake Historical Society to preserve and interpret the history of the several extinct and extant villages and communities in the Clinton Lake vicinity. The museum has been open since 1983 and prides itself on the title "Smallest Museum in the World". Containing just five exhibits ranging from the construction and destruction of the J.C. Steele house, to the Under-

ground Railroad, the Civil War and the Indian Period, the museum is full of local history.

The current museum director, Martha Parker, has proven the Clinton area has historical significance over the years she has researched and lived in the area. Martha has amassed records, genealogies, books, tours and stories while stirring up activities and dramas to keep the dramatic history of Clinton alive. The smallest museum in the world is built on the sec-

ond Bloomington town site on the former milkshed grounds of the Steele home. The Steele's were abolitionists; five of their sons were in the civil war. As you leave the museum and look to your right you will see the last remains of the original Steele home, a brick window.

The Clinton Lake museum is maintained by local area residents and open on weekends. As you visit the Clinton Lake area we hope you take a few minutes to stop by and say hi.

Ask a Ranger

Editor's Note: The Ask a Ranger column is new to the Clinton Lake Report this year. Feel free to submit questions to the Corps Rangers via email at clinton@nwk02.usace.army.mil.

Why are the Park Rangers becoming strict on the discharge of gray water when it has been allowed in the past?
The discharge of gray water (water from the sink or shower) is prohibited according to Title 36, the governing

rules and regulations for Corps of Engineer's facilities. Gray water needs to be properly disposed of at designated dump stations.

Why are the gate attendant hours changing again?

Budget constraints did not allow the hiring of a third gate attendant, so the hours now have to be shared by the remaining two sets of gate attendants.

Rest assured, they will continue to provide the high level of service that they are known for.

Why is alcohol prohibited at the beach?

In response to visitor complaints and to reduce the mix of alcohol and swimming, the use of alcoholic beverages is now prohibited at the swimming beach area.

Fire as a Management Tool

Prescribed burning is a vital tool for natural resource management at Clinton Lake. Beginning in late winter, Corps of Engineer's staff conduct numerous prescribed burns throughout the lake area. Prescribed burning serves many purposes including ground litter removal, woody encroachment reduction, and increased grass species' germination.

The timing of the burns is crucial when considering the plant species' that are being managed. Often, late winter burns in February and early March are appropriate for the management of fescue and brome. March



Corps' Ranger conducting a prescribed burn

tends to be the best month for wildflower management. Burns conducted in early spring are more appropriate for some of the warm season grasses

such as big bluestem, little bluestem, and Indian grass.

Preparation is the key to a successful burn. Burn plans are prepared months in advance and address issues such as wildlife management, conditions of the fields, wind and humidity parameters, and of course safety of the personnel conducting the burn.

During the day of the burn, a "Fire Boss" will inform the burn team of the plan of operation and specific safety requirements that need to be addressed. After the burn is completed, the team will conduct a post-burn analysis.

Reestablishing Native Grass Stands

Native grass or more accurately warm season grasses such as big bluestem, little bluestem, and Indian grass are a crucial element of the lake ecosystem. Unlike more traditional cool season grasses such as fescue and brome, warm season grasses require much less maintenance. Warm season grasses do not require frequent applications of fertilizers, reducing the impact of chemical runoff and



Warm Season Grass Mixture

application costs. Visitors will notice many fields in Bloomington and Overlook Parks that appear over-

grown and unsightly, but they are actually in transition to warm season establishment. Included in the seed mixtures are numerous wildflowers, so be on the lookout during late spring.

True native grass stands contain numerous plant species. A warm season mixture contains 10-15 plant species, but via natural succession, numerous other species will be introduced.

Volunteers Receive Special Recognition

The volunteer program at Clinton Lake has proved to be a huge success over the past years. Numerous volunteers from across the United States have participated in the program by performing campground maintenance, landscaping, trail work and visitor assistance duties.

The work of a campground volunteer can be a challenge, especially when it is 90 degrees and 90% humidity. Lew Ruona, Operations Pro-

ject Manager, recognized the work of two dedicated volunteers by presenting Floyd Webb and Leroy Liberty with certificates of achievement for their selfless devotion to volunteerism at Clinton Lake.

Campground volunteers are required to work twenty hours of work per week for a free full service campsite. Limited campground volunteer positions are available, but anyone interested may contact the Corps' Office.

Phone Numbers

Emergency Assistance

Emergency 911
Lawrence Memorial Hosp. 749-6100

Visitor Services

Corps of Engineers Office 843-7665
Clinton Marina 749-3222
Clinton State Park 842-8562
Clinton Wildlife Area 887-6882
City of Lawrence 832-7900
Volunteer Hotline 800-865-8337
Reserve America 877-444-6777

Lake Information

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Web: <http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil>

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Fees (Corps)

Camping: \$12-\$18 a night
Day Use: \$3/day at ramps,
beach is \$1/person, \$4.00
max/vehicle

Congress authorized Clinton Lake in 1962 and funds were first appropriated for construction in 1971. Nearly \$55 million was needed to complete the project. In 1977 initial filling of Clinton Lake began. To improve fishing potential, the lake was filled slowly over a three-year period. The multipurpose pool level was reached in 1980.

Zebra Mussels

Zebra mussels are a non-indigenous aquatic species that were accidentally introduced to North America in the 1980's. Their range will continue to expand naturally as flowing water carries their young to other waters.

They are damaging the natural eco-system by eating the food native fish and mussels commonly eat. Recreational and commercial boating is affected as the mussels damage boats, fishing populations, and infrastructure.

Boaters are asked to help slow the spread by completing the following:

- Remove any visible vegetation from items that were in the water. This includes the boat, propeller, trailer, and equipment.
- Flush the engine cooling system, live wells, and bilge with hot water. (140 degrees for adults and 110 degrees for the young). Rinse any other areas that get wet.
- Air dry the boat and other equipment for five days before using in waters that are unaffected.
- Examine the boat exterior for mussels if it has been docked in infested waters.

It is important that boaters understand zebra mussels and help slow the spread.

Upper Wakarusa WRAPS

Clinton Lake is a critical resource for water supply, flood control, and outdoor recreation. The Upper Wakarusa Watershed WRAPS (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy) Committee coordinates partner efforts to protect the resource. The committee reviewed nearly sixty years of research on the Upper Wakarusa River and compiled a set of goals to guide protection efforts. The work of the UWW WRAPS committee has become a template for other watershed protection groups statewide.

The purpose of this WRAPS is to:

- Acknowledge and bring together the efforts of all agencies doing work in the watershed to improve the water quality of Clinton Lake and the Upper Wakarusa Watershed River and its tributaries.
- Summarize historic information into one document.

- Evaluate the current condition of Clinton Lake and its watershed.
- Establish Water Quality Objectives for the river and lake.
- Recommend water pollution control practices and policies to further improve water quality.

The Upper Wakarusa Watershed (UWW) and Clinton Lake have been the subject of study by numerous government agencies for over 60 years. Historic data are available for the watershed dating from 1940 and the most recent comprehensive studies of the lake and watershed were completed in 2001. Conclusions consistently indicate that land use practices in the watershed contribute to impaired water quality in the Wakarusa River and in Clinton Lake.

Historically a watershed dominated by tall-grass prairie, conversion to agricultural uses has resulted in in-

creased amounts of sediment and nutrients leaving the land and entering the aquatic system. Land use in the watershed is currently 56% grassland/rangeland and 27% cropland. The riparian area has been diminished to narrow corridors along the tributaries and river. Several communities including Lawrence, KS utilize Clinton Lake for drinking water including 1.6 million visitors to the lake per year.

In the 1970s the UWW was one of 13 pilot programs of the United States Department of Agriculture termed the Rural Clean Water Program. For more information on the Upper Wakarusa WRAPS and their current activities please contact the Kaw Valley Heritage Alliance at 412 E. 9th Street, Lawrence, KS 66044. They may be reached by telephone at 785-840-0700 or email at kvha@kvha.org.